

## **CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**BA-1063**

**441a East Pennsylvania Avenue**

**East Towson, Baltimore County**

**1920-1935**

Private

The dwelling at 441a East Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1920 and 1935 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendants of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

Sitting back from the road, this dwelling fronts west on a level lot surrounded by mature trees and shrubs, and is not visible from the road. On a solid concrete foundation this wood frame Craftsman Bungalow stands one-and-a-half stories in height and is two bays wide. Across the full-width of the façade, a partially screened in porch is supported with battered wood posts resting on brick piers with a partial solid frame balustrade. The entrance contains a single-leaf multi-light wood door with 6-light sidelights (the bottom pane is louvered). Paired double-hung sash windows flank the entrance. Above the porch is a wood fascia board that continues around the perimeter of the house. The hipped roof features overhanging eaves, a wide fascia board, a boxed wood cornice, and is covered with asphalt shingles. The one hipped-roof dormer on the façade contains three multi-light casement windows with diamond shaped panes. One exterior-side half-shouldered brick chimney is seen on the northeast elevation, and the building is clad in wood shingles.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA- 1063

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other

### 2. Location

street and number 441a East Pennsylvania Avenue not for publication

city, town Baltimore vicinity

county Baltimore County

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Robert D. Miller, Jr.

street and number 441 E. Pennsylvania Avenue telephone Not Available

city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21286-5409

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber 14934 folio 472

city, town Towson tax map 70 tax parcel 69 tax ID number 923501170

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	1
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	1
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			1

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## 7. Description

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Inventory No. BA- 1063

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Sitting back from the road, this dwelling fronts west on a level lot surrounded by mature trees and shrubs, and is not visible from the road. On a solid concrete foundation this wood frame Craftsman Bungalow stands one-and-a-half stories in height and is two bays wide. Across the full-width of the façade, a partially screened in porch is supported with battered wood posts resting on brick piers with a partial solid frame balustrade. The entrance contains a single-leaf multi-light wood door with 6-light sidelights (the bottom pane is louvered). Paired double-hung sash windows flank the entrance. Above the porch is a wood fascia board that continues around the perimeter of the house. The hipped roof features overhanging eaves, a wide fascia board, a boxed wood cornice, and is covered with asphalt shingles. The one hipped-roof dormer on the façade contains three multi-light casement windows with diamond shaped panes. One exterior-side half-shouldered brick chimney is seen on the northeast elevation, and the building is clad in wood shingles.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA 1063

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

**Specific dates** 1920-1935 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1920-1935

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The house at 441a East Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1920 and 1935 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-1063

*Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

*Map of Baltimore County.* Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .23 Acre  
Acreage of historical setting Unknown  
Quadrangle name Towson

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The house is located at 441a East Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with Tax Map 70, Parcel 69 since its construction between 1920 and 1935.

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	K. Baynard, R. Weidlich, J. Bunting, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Incorporated	date	December 28, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



# East Towson: Planimetric Data



BA #: 1063  
Name: House, 441a Pennsylvania Avenue  
East Towson  
Baltimore County



Prepared by:  
Baltimore County Office of Planning  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204  
June, 2001



Scale  
1 inch = 200 feet  
1:2400  
100 0 100 200 Feet

## Legend

- |                           |                     |                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Paved Roads               | Study Area Boundary | Hydrographic Features |
| Unpaved Roads             | Buildings           | Vegetation            |
| Paved Parking / Driveways |                     |                       |

Data Sources:  
Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)  
Coordinate System:  
Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum  
Elevations in Feet: NAVD86 Vertical Datum  
Date of Data Capture: March 1996  
Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'



East Towson  
Towson, Maryland  
Towson USGS Quad Map  
Baltimore County

BA-1063

(BALTIMORE WEST)  
5662' SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
Edited and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland  
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

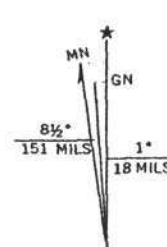
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs  
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944  
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system  
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only  
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from  
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not  
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET





BA-1063

HOUSE, 4410 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/1001

MD-SHPD

WEST ELEVATION

1 of 1



BA-1063  
HOUSE, 441 a PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

NORTH ELEVATION

2 of 2

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

THE BEN WILSON HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

441<sup>a</sup> Pennsylvania Ave.

second

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md.

VICINITY OF

Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT  
☐ BUILDING(S)  
☒ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
☐ ACCESSIBLE  
☐ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Benjamin and Mary J. Wilson

Telephone #: 823-3679

STREET &amp; NUMBER

441 Pennsylvania Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204 VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

401 Bosley Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

BA-1063 - 441a Pennsylvania

1927

This one-story brown-shingled frame bungalow has a hipped roof with a single dormer protruding on each side. A porch is inset under the western end of the roof. The house is four bays deep by three bays wide.



**7 DESCRIPTION****CONDITION**

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

**CHECK ONE**

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

**CHECK ONE**

☐ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Ben Wilson Hs. -- Pennsylvania Ave.

Ben Wilson had this house built in 1927. Its bungalow appearance represents a distinct break in style from the earlier East Towson houses.

The 1 1/2 story, brown wood-shingled house has an east-west gable roof ending in hip-roofed dormers at either end. A low, wide shed-roofed dormer appears in each side of the roof slope. An inset semi-enclosed porch with tapered square columns fills the front, or west of the first story. A shed-roofed porch runs across the east end.

The floor plan consists of four rooms, one in each corner of the house. The southwest room contains a stair featuring a square newel post. A door flanked by sidelights enters this room from the porch. The northwest parlor is lit by two west windows. Three diamond-paned windows, the center one half-size, appear along the south wall. A plain band of wood on the south side runs along the porch ceiling and continues along the top of the three windows.

The house is located at the end of a long field running north from Pennsylvania Avenue.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE****PERIOD**

☐ PREHISTORIC  
☐ 1400-1499  
☐ 1500-1599  
☐ 1600-1699  
☐ 1700-1799  
☐ 1800-1899  
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC  
☐ AGRICULTURE  
☐ ARCHITECTURE  
☐ ART  
☐ COMMERCE  
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING  
☐ CONSERVATION  
☐ ECONOMICS  
☐ EDUCATION  
☐ ENGINEERING  
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
☐ INDUSTRY  
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
☐ LAW  
☐ LITERATURE  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSIC  
☐ PHILOSOPHY  
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION  
☐ SCIENCE  
☐ SCULPTURE  
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN  
☐ THEATER  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

**SPECIFIC DATES****BUILDER/ARCHITECT****STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Ben Wilson house is one of the last bungalow styled houses in the community. It has been owned by the Wilsons since its construction. This house represents a distinct difference in style.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Marcus Pollock/coordinator Merry Stinson/architect 7/77

ORGANIZATION

Committee to Save E. Towson/Towson Ymca

DATE

823-8870

STREET &amp; NUMBER

600 W. Chesapeake Ave

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438





BA-1063

Ben Wilson House

441a Pa. Ave.

Towson, Md.

South

Merry Stinson

1977